Reden des Inspekteurs der Marine

Vizeadmiral Andreas Krause

1. Keynote: Internationales Maritimes Symposium
2. Ansprache anlässlich des Empfangs

anlässlich der Feierlichkeiten

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**Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests!**

*(VIP Liste durch KL Till)*

Also a sincere welcome to our panelists, **Dr. Babst**, Head of the Strategic Analysis Capability of NATO, **General Bartels**, former Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO, **Vice Admiral Johnstone**, Commander Allied Maritime Command, **Rear Admiral Martens**, Deputy Commander German Fleet and, of course our presenter, **Dr. Kamp**, President of the Federal Academy for Security Policy.

**Good afternoon to all of you and Welcome to the German Navy.**

What a pleasure to celebrate our 60th anniversary with many longtime friends and partners!

60 years. To many of our friends assembled here today, whose navies trace their origins back over centuries, 60 years sounds rather young. And having turned 60 this year myself I would of course perfectly subscribe to this view.

However, also our roots reach far deeper in history. This very place where we are sitting, my headquarters, is located in the beautiful Hanseatic city of Rostock.

I myself was born in another Hanseatic city, in Lübeck, a mere 70 nautical miles to the west.

Rostock and Lübeck were once part of the so called “Hanseatic League”, a commercial and defensive confederation of cities, stretching from the Baltic to the North Sea during the late middle ages to the early modern period. The Hanseatic League was at its time the major maritime power in northern Europe. It fought pirates – and at times employed them – and it even waged wars.

This maritime cooperation ensured maritime security in the region and brought prosperity to the connected cities. It worked, because these maritime merchants and traders by their very nature looked beyond borders and over the sea. They realized that through mutual support and partnership they all could benefit.

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

With this historical background it might seem odd that there even should be a need for a “renaissance of the Northern Flank”. Now as then the Northern Flank is of strategic interest to Germany, as it is to our neighbors: here our strategic sea lines of communication converge; and here we find one of the busiest maritime hubs of European trade.

But in fact the strategic appreciation of the Northern Flank and the Baltic Sea in particular has always been highly controversial. You could argue that this debate has been and still is a defining momentum in the German Navy’s history, from the time of our establishment in 1956 until today.

Admiral Johannesson, first Commander-in-Chief of the German Fleet in 1956, considered the Baltic Sea already to be lost to the Soviet Union, NATO essentially in an un-defendable position. Consequently, instead of building up strong defences in the Baltic, he proposed to focus on defending the trans-Atlantic link to North America.

The strategy eventually pursued however was twofold and has informed the development of the German Navy since. The Baltic Approaches instead were recognized to be the Achilles’ heel of the Alliance where the enemy’s thrust threatened to sever Northern from Central Europe.

While the North and Norwegian Seas were regarded as supply routes to be held open for reinforcements from North America, forces in the Baltic Sea were tasked to counter possible Warsaw Pact attempts to break through the Baltic approaches.

The German fleet was tailored for that very purpose. This was the Navy I grew up in as a submariner. This was the Navy which developed its internationally recognized expertise in fast attack boat tactics – the very “Schnellboote” of which we will decommission the last two out of forty tomorrow.

When the Iron Curtain fell and the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, the perception of the Northern Flank as a presumptive battleground changed radically. The North Sea and the Norwegian Sea were no longer in the focus of security policy considerations, and the perception of the Baltic Sea became that of a sea of peace.

Germany was granted the gift of reunification. The two German Navies united and built the “Deutsche Marine” of today. Like many others we dreamed the dream of “the end of history”. We saw ourselves encircled by friends and the Navy downsized to cash-in on a “peace dividend”.

Security policy agendas were now dominated by the Middle East and Balkans conflicts. Relevant areas of operations now included the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the east coast of Africa, from the Horn of Africa to the Persian Gulf.

Orientation had shifted from national and collective defence to crisis response and conflict management in a multinational environment.

The German Navy participated in embargo operations, the fight against international terrorism, and the protection of commercial shipping against piracy. We were busy transforming into an expeditionary Navy.

There was no imminent need to concern ourselves with strategic questions on what could happen on our doorstep. Anyway, we thought we easily would have a ten-year warning time to re-build our defences – which nobody thought would ever be necessary.

We were abruptly woken from this dream in 2014 when Russia in blatant disregard of international law annexed Crimea and invaded eastern Ukraine.

We had to realize that we might have overslept our warning time. And even worse: in our modern times it would not even take a massive build-up of a conventional threat posture to thoroughly disrupt the international system – some “green men” suffice.

I don’t think that anyone today will argue that since 2014 our view of the Northern Flank has undergone massive change.

As we all know, the Alliance swiftly responded to Russia's new policies with the Wales Summit decisions. National and collective defence were given the same priority as international crisis management, which was affirmed by this year's Warsaw Summit communiqué.

The North Atlantic and the neighbouring Arctic Ocean returned to our attention as prospective areas of operations for the German Navy. So did the Baltic Sea.

The German government's response is defined in this year's White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr. It puts collective defence and crisis management on an equal footing – and, beyond that, for the first time acknowledges our responsibility to contribute to safeguarding the freedom of navigation on a global scale.

For the German Navy, by far smaller today than during the Cold War, this means to revive our littoral warfare capabilities, which always have been one of our trademarks. We have to do this with the same proverbial “single set of forces” with which we have to participate in crisis management operations and show presence and take on our responsibilities particularly in the Indian Ocean.

At the same time we, the German Navy, all our navies and armed forces are stretched to the limits in our international crisis management operations across the globe.

The German armed forces are changing tack accordingly. The threefold turnaround in materiel *(the armed forces return to 100% equipping all standing forces instead of rotating materiel)*, personnel *(we now do away with fixed personnel ceilings and instead dynamically increase and adjust personnel structures)* and finances *(a further 130bn Euros defence expenditure until 2030)* that we have entered upon is in answer to these changes.

**However, the challenge, ladies and gentlemen, remains huge.**

Alas, today we face a fundamentally different situation in the Northern Flank than we used to in the Cold War era. While then the western Baltic Sea had been considered a barrier to be defended, the Baltic Sea today is a lifeline. It links our exposed allies in Poland and the Baltic states with the rest of Europe and the Alliance. While in the past most of the Baltic’s coastline was either strictly neutral or in our opponent’s hands, now most of the Baltic Sea states are either Allies or partners in the EU.

This does not only change our operational approach and our military requirements. It calls for a thorough re-discovery of the geography we operate in. But it also offers us the key to safeguarding our freedom and prosperity: This challenge is not to be accomplished by any Navy alone, but only through solidarity, cooperation and coordination.

The better we coordinate our efforts to re-build our capacities and forces, the more we will benefit from the synergies in the areas of training, operation, and logistics. In a security environment that is rapidly changing, that is challenging our Navies to the maximum, we must stick together. We must take the initiative. We must be innovative.

**Ladies and Gentlemen!**

Today, we celebrate 60 years of German Navy history.

Operating and serving worldwide, our regional focus is back on the northern part of the Alliance territory. **This is, where we have to be ready for article 5 operations, this is where we have to be prepared for battle side to side with our allies and partners.**

The Northern Flank of today is, different to Cold War, shaped by allies, partners and friends. That is a tremendous change and a great opportunity.

**Before closing I allow me two final remarks:**

I want to take the opportunity to thank our crews, our men and women in operations at sea, in the air and on land. It is them who formed 60 years of German Naval History with their courage and determination.

Lastly, let me come back to where I started: the Hanseatic League.

Its success had lasted for 400 years – not a bad accomplishment after all. The Hanseatic spirit, the resourcefulness and initiative, is still there between our nations. Standing together, trusting each other and working together for a common goal. So let’s go and have another 400 years.

That, of course, takes to look beyond borders and over the sea. But, you know, who could do this better than we? It’s in our DNA!

**Thank you very much - The symposium is officially opened.**